

Remarks

The Applicant thanks the Office for the consideration given the present application in the last Detailed Action. With the foregoing amendments and the ensuing remarks, the Applicant has endeavored to respond most properly to each of the points raised by the Office to ensure that the specification and claims now presented are allowable in all respects. With this in mind, the Applicant respectfully requests that the Office review and allow the current specification and claims.

In brief summary, the present application was filed with 43 claims in total with claims 1 and 31 standing independently. Claims 1, 8, 23, 24, 37, 42, and 43 have been canceled, and claims 16 and 32 are canceled herewith. Claims 2-7, 9-15, 17-22, 25-31, 33-36, and 38-41 are presented for consideration. Claims 11, 16, and 22 previously stood independently, and claims 9, 17, 18, and 19 have been rewritten to stand independently. A plurality of claims have been amended for, among other things, proper dependency.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103 / Allowable Subject Matter

The Office continued its rejection of claims 10, 16, and 31 as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,071,740 to Kerouac in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,587,320 to Shindo et al. and U.S. Patent No. 6,399,366 to Seagren. However, the Office indicated that claims 2-7, 11-15, 22, and 25-30 were allowed. Further, claims 9, 17-21, 32-36, and 38-41 were objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim but indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

In reliance on the Office's indications as to allowability, the Applicant has amended each

of claims 9, 17, 18, and 19 to stand independently incorporating all limitations of canceled base claim 16 and any intervening claims. Also, independent claim 31 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of objected-to and now canceled claim 32. Claims 10 and 32 through 35 have been amended to depend from claims 9 and 31 respectively. Since these amendments rely on and comply with the Office's determinations, it is believed that all pending claims are in condition for allowance.

Conclusion

Because no cited reference identically discloses the claimed invention and because there is no suggestion in the art to modify or combine any of the prior art references to approximate the claimed invention, the Applicant most respectfully submits that the claims now presented are patentable over the cited art. With this in mind, the Office's reconsideration and allowance of the specification and claims are respectfully requested.

The Applicant believes that all issues raised in the Detailed Action have been responded to fully. However, if, after consideration of the above amendments and comments, there remain any open issues in this application that possibly can be resolved by a telephone interview, then the Applicant's undersigned attorney most respectfully requests that he be called to discuss and attempt to resolve those issues.

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Respectfully submitted,

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Date